



**DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE**  
**HEADQUARTERS AIR FORCE CIVIL ENGINEER SUPPORT AGENCY**

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

FROM: HQ AFCESA/CC  
139 Barnes Drive Suite 1  
Tyndall AFB FL 32403-5319

SUBJECT: Firefighter Morale, Retention, and Discipline Report – General Information

1. In September 1999, HQ USAF/ILE initiated a firefighter morale, retention, and discipline committee to gather data, formulate suggestions, and provide proposals to improve enlisted firefighter morale and discipline. The committee's report was briefed to the Civil Engineer (CE) Chiefs' and Airmen's Councils for consideration (attachment 1). The resulting CE Chiefs' Council recommendations and current status are contained in attachment 2. HQ AFCESA is currently establishing a multi-functional Integrated Process Team (IPT) to specifically address and focus on the recommendations. In the interim, we believe it is important to provide information to the field, so all firefighters are aware of the action underway.

2. Based on the data collected, we believe there are several recurring issues that may be well within the control of base-level leadership (i.e., Wing, Group, Squadron Commanders or Fire Chiefs). Some of these issues were:

a. Ensure the fire protection flight has a policy that ensures a fair and equitable approval process for granting leave to junior fire protection enlisted personnel.

b. Take every possible action to prevent firefighters from working hours above the standard 72-hour workweek; i.e., do not routinely cancel scheduled days off for military personnel assigned to the fire operations section without first exploring all other methods to increase staffing in the fire operations section.

c. Try to avoid requiring military firefighters assigned to the fire operations section to attend training or appointments on their scheduled days off.

d. When required, ensure adequate funding is available for replacement of protective clothing and other personal protective equipment.

e. In addition to authorization to take fire response vehicles to the dining hall, explore and coordinate local agreements to allow on-duty fire operations personnel to take fire vehicles to commercial dining establishments (i.e., Burger King).

f. Consider flexible schedules for military personnel assigned to the fire operations section to allow maximum participation in intramural sports programs. Consider policies that would allow on-duty personnel/crews to take a fire response vehicle to the on-base sports event.

g. When possible, ensure policies are in place to minimize conducting training exercises on holidays or Wing down days.

h. Develop meaningful and challenging fire protection training exercises.

i. Establish local procedures for military personnel assigned to fire operations section to allow maximum participation in educational programs. If necessary to maintain minimum manning levels, consider policies that would allow on-duty personnel/crews to take a fire response vehicle to educational courses.

3. Firefighter morale and retention are serious Civil Engineering leadership issues at all levels. Current policies and practices within fire protection flights should be evaluated to determine if changes could be implemented that would enhance firefighter morale and discipline. Our firefighters are some of the best-trained firefighters in the world, and we simply cannot afford to continue this negative discipline and retention/poor morale trend.

4. Request you disseminate this information to Civil Engineers, Command Chief Master Sergeants, and fire protection personnel at all levels. Your assistance is appreciated. The HQ AFCESA/CEXF point of contact is CMSgt Carl Glover, DSN 523-6112, email: carl.glover@afcesa.af.mil.

// SIGNED//

BRUCE R. BARTHOLD, Colonel, USAF  
Commander

Attachments:

1. Firefighter Morale, Retention and Discipline Study
2. CE Chiefs' Council Recommendations and Status

DISTRIBUTION:

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312 TRS/CC

## **CE Chiefs' Council Recommendations and Status**

(As of 23 Oct 00)

1. Suggest an Integrated Process Team (IPT) be chartered in partnership with AF/XP, ILEX, and AFCESA to investigate feasibility to place military firefighters on a standard 56-hour shift schedule. This IPT would also determine the best approach using Operational Risk Management (ORM) and available resources from all of CE. The IPT would develop an action plan when an approach is approved.

STATUS ITEM 1: HQ AFCESA is currently establishing a multi-functional IPT to investigate the firefighter shift schedule as well as the other recommendations of the Civil Engineer Chiefs' Council. AF/ILE letter announcing the IPT and the first meeting (tentatively 11-13 Dec 00) is in coordination.

2. Suggest a 50/50 (military/civilian) mix of leadership authorizations in each flight with military personnel assigned. Recommend AF/ILEX prepare an updated letter to MAJCOM Civil Engineers that mirrors Major General McCarthy's original letter on this subject. Recommend HQ AFCESA track and report progress.

STATUS ITEM 2: HQ AFCESA has started the data-gathering phase to determine the current status of the 50/50 initiative. When last reported (Nov 98), approximately 40 percent of the management positions were military. Upon evaluation of the updated data, the multi-functional IPT will evaluate and draft an updated letter to reinforce the importance of the proper military/civilian leadership mix within fire protection leadership positions. HQ AFCESA/CEX has obtained the current status of the 50/50 initiative from the MAJCOMs, and the IPT will evaluate the data and determine if additional action is necessary.

3. Suggest the military grade structure be aligned as closely as possible to the Air Force model for an enlisted AFS. This would correct the existing grade imbalance and resolve issues such as shortage of NCOs, lack of mentorship, deployment inequity, and forced re-training. This should happen in the Career Progression Guide (CPG) re-alignment now in progress. Suggest HQ AFCESA prepare a letter for ILE signature to MAJCOM Civil Engineers stressing the importance of implementing the CPG once designed. The CPG re-alignment not only fixes the Firefighter AFS, but also at the same time, builds healthy enlisted grade distributions for the Readiness, Pavements & Equipment, and Operations Management career fields. One MAJCOM not implementing the CPG re-alignment would have a devastating domino affect across the entire Air Force in these career fields.

STATUS ITEM 3: HQ AFCESA/CC briefed the importance of the CPG implementation process to AF/ILE and MAJCOM/CEs. The Air Staff has provided the CPG allocations to the MAJCOMs with an Oct 00 implementation date. HQ AFCESA will continue to monitor throughout the implementation phase.

4. Suggest MAJCOM Civil Engineers continue to stress timely completion of live fire training facilities. Realistic and challenging training scenarios are vital for both training proficiency and morale.

STATUS ITEM 4: Since 1998 the Air Force has placed increased focus on the completion of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) Fire Training Facilities (FTF) for aircraft firefighter training. We commissioned 25 new FTFs in FY99; only six were commissioned in FY98. During FY00, we commissioned another 13 FTFs. This increase was a direct result of initiatives of HQ AFCESA and MAJCOM civil engineers. We progressed from only 9 operational LPG FTFs in FY98 to 51 operational FTFs as of Sep 00. The multi-functional IPT will address the issue of what can be done to develop realistic and challenging training scenarios for aircraft and structural firefighter training programs. The new firefighter physical fitness program may be beneficial with development of challenging evolutions to refine skills, highlight physical fitness, and improve morale/teamwork among firefighters.

5. Recommend AF/ILE and AF/ILEM partner with SAF/MI and other agencies (including the Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force) to recruit advocacy for Hazardous Duty Incentive Pay for firefighters.

STATUS ITEM 5: HQ AFCESA submitted the FY02 Legislative Proposal package concerning HDIP in Aug 00. The multi-functional IPT will partner and coordinate with the agencies recommended and review the package and/or make recommendations for alternative approaches for future submissions. HQ AFCESA validated the number of firefighters affected with each Service component, and the package was forwarded to AF/IL on 25 Sep 00.

6. Recommend a Fire Chief Master Sergeant (Chief Enlisted Manager Code 3E700) authorization be transferred to the 312<sup>th</sup> TRS and a CMSgt be assigned. The purpose of this position is to form a link between the 312<sup>th</sup> and the functional community (Air Staff, HQ AFCESA, and MAJCOMs). The Chief would also recruit and mentor the Air Force Firefighter Instructor Corps and provide a positive career image for new firefighters. This would mirror the positive results seen from the three CMSgts assigned to the 366<sup>th</sup> TRS (a 3E000 Chief at Sheppard, a 3E900 Chief at Ft Leonard Wood, and a 3E800 Chief at Eglin AFB).

STATUS ITEM 6: HQ AFCESA reserved an additional CMSgt CPG allocation for AETC for placement at the Fire Academy. HQ AFCESA and AETC have started the actions necessary to upgrade a current UMD position to a CMSgt position for the academy. HQ AFCESA conducted a meeting with Lt Col Smith, Capt Ferland, Capt Griffin, and CMSgt Doris (at the fire conference) to develop the strategy for establishing the CMSgt position at the fire school. The CMSgt allocation for the fire academy was established during the last CPG process (Apr 00). The CMSgt CPG allocation has flowed to AETC for placement at the Fire Academy. Initial coordination has started with the 312 TRS/CC to complete actions necessary to upgrade a current UMD position to a CMSgt position for the academy.

7. Suggest AF/ILEX partner with AF/ILTT to investigate and champion change if necessary to the wording in the "Vehicle" AFI. This action is necessary to allow commanders as much discretion as possible to allow the use of fire vehicles at eating establishments, sporting events, military offices, functions, etc.

STATUS ITEM 7: Initial look at AFI 24-301, Vehicle Operations, indicated that Installation Commanders have some authority concerning the use of fire vehicles when necessary to meet rapid response capability required to meet the mission. AF/ILEX will staff a letter to AF/ILTV to request

clarification or determine if a change to the AFI is necessary. Depending on the response from AF/ILTV, the multi-functional IPT will review and make recommendations.

8. Recommend MAJCOM Civil Engineers task functional managers to review their Master Sergeant (3E771) authorizations and take action to achieve the best balance possible of Master Sergeants in Master Sergeant positions.

STATUS ITEM 8: The multi-functional IPT will coordinate with HQ AFPC/DPAAD1, make recommendations, and draft a letter to MAJCOMs.

9. Suggest MAJCOM Civil Engineers stress the importance to Squadron Commanders on visiting and interacting with personnel in the Fire Protection Flight.

STATUS ITEM 9: The multi-functional IPT will make recommendations and draft a letter to MAJCOMs.

10. Recommend AF/ILE add a subject line in briefings to Group and Wing Commanders on awards and decorations for firefighters. There have been cases where decorations for heroic acts were disapproved by Group or Wing Commanders because “it’s their job.”

STATUS ITEM 10: The multi-functional IPT will investigate the validity and, if necessary, make recommendations.

11. Suggest HQ AFCESA and MAJCOM Civil Engineers investigate and plan for improvements to the capability for firefighters to enroll and complete college Internet classes at the fire station.

STATUS ITEM 11: The multi-functional IPT will investigate and make recommendations.

12. Recommend Squadron Commanders and Fire Chiefs explore all avenues, including programming for civilian overtime, to reduce cancellation of leaves and calling in military on days off. Every effort should be made, including coordination and cooperation with supporting organizations, to avoid scheduling military appointments on off-duty days.

STATUS ITEM 12: The multi-functional IPT will make recommendations.

13. Suggest MAJCOMs swap, convert, or transition military firefighter positions at bases without a Unit Type Code (UTC) mobility commitment to civil service firefighters. Military positions should be re-located to bases with an UTC. First consideration should be to accomplish this action within the command. However, the action should be accomplished even if the “swap” must cross commands. HQ AFCESA and AF/ILEX should monitor the transition and ensure completion.

STATUS ITEM 13: The multi-functional IPT will investigate and make recommendations.